

Editorial

A tribute to Professor Claudio Barros (1936-2008)

Claudio Barros Rodriguez graduated in 1960 with a degree in Biology from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. He then went to the United States to study at Tulane University, where he obtained his PhD in 1968. From among the events in his distinguished career we want to highlight his appointments as Visiting Scientist at the Department of Biology at the University of Houston and the Medical Research Council, UK and Fellow of the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). He was President of the Ibero-American Society for Cell Biology and Vice-President of the International Federation of Cell Biology. In Latin America, he was Official Guest at the National University of Tucumán, Argentina; Professor Honoris Causa at the National University of San Marcos and Ricardo Palma University, both in Lima, Peru. His scientific merits were well recognized beyond the limits of Chile: science has no frontiers.

Professor Barros will be remembered as a beloved teacher, scientist, friend, husband and father. His passion for science was devoted to understanding fertilization: the union of the sperm and the oocyte, the beginning of life itself. His vision of Biology was integrative: to understand fertilization through biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, physiology and even evolutionary tools and concepts. He could not accept that fertilization can be understood using only one approach. His rigorous mind and hard working attitude established him as a world leader in the problem of sperm biology and particularly in the process of acrosome reaction. His passion for science was also a passion for life. As a teacher, he was the mentor of a great number of undergraduate, Masters and PhD students from different universities. In addition, he was devoted to creating new educational programs for schoolteachers for the ongoing improvement and updating of their knowledge of Biology. Moreover, he believed that science has no frontiers, no limits, so he had a number of foreigner students including from Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic. He was also President of the Chilean Biology Society, the Chilean Society of Reproduction and Development, and in this context he always pushed for educational programs for undergraduate students in science.

Professor Barros was an extremely demanding teacher. He was demanding because he always wanted to teach the best, he wanted to educate scientists with rigorous minds and critical views of science and the world. We are all indebted to his passion for teaching, his love and generosity to always share his knowledge with his students and with anyone who wanted to learn. Over the years we realized that thanks to his dedication, passion and love, we could become good scientists and human beings.

During his last years, he passed all his experience on to the general community. He participated in the "EXPLORA"



Program of CONICYT, where he had the opportunity to teach about fertilization to young school kids, who were fascinated with biology.

Finally, Professor Barros was the perfect combination of science and faith. During his last years he became a deacon of the Catholic Church. He was convinced that there is no problem in combining faith and science. He was devoted to studying the ethical and philosophical issue of the origin of human life. Is an embryo a human being? As a biologist and a deacon he had solid biological and theological knowledge to blend these areas and to seek new answers and research avenues.

The Chilean Biology Society and Biological Research are grateful to Professor Barros, he gave his energy and passion to organize and promote numerous excellent meetings and he wanted Biological Research to be one of the greatest scientific journals in Latin America. This issue is dedicated to his memory and legacy. The authors of the research articles in this issue were students, colleagues or beloved friends of Professor Barros, and they still investigate on the question that was his life's work: Fertilization. In this issue we present research articles dealing with fertilization from different points of view. We present articles on fertilization in invertebrates, fish and mammals, from the perspectives of molecular biology and physiology; an integrative view, just would have wanted us to honor him. We also include an article dealing with the bioethical issue of fertilization and the origin of human life, which was his major interest during his last years.

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